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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of social studies experiences on the attitudes of young black children towards themselves and whites. Subjects were 54 children, 4 years of age, representing a low socioeconomic population. The children were divided into three groups of 18 each. Group 1 read and discussed selected multi-ethnic social studies materials. Group 2 read and discussed these selections and received field-trip experiences based upon these readings. Group 3 received traditional preschool experiences. All groups received a 20-item attitude pretest and posttest. IQ did not differ significantly between groups. Based upon the results of Hartley's F test, a one-way analysis of covariance showed significant differences among treatment groups. Using a two sample t-test, the results of the study indicated that Groups 1 and 3 and 2 and 3 differed significantly in attitude. No significant differences were found in attitude change between Groups 1 and 2. (Author/SB)

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EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCES ON BLACK PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES AND WHITES

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EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCES ON BLACK PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES AND WHITES

ABSTRACT

Fifty-four children, 4 years of age, representing a low socio-economic population served as Ss in this study. The children, divided into three groups of eighteen Ss each, read and discussed selected multi-ethnic social studies materials in Group 1. Group 2 read and discussed these selections and received field-trip experiences based upon these readings. Group 3 received the regular preschool experience in a traditional curriculum. All groups received a 20-item attitude pretest and posttest. IQ did not significantly differ between the groups. Based upon the results of Hartley's F_{max} test a one-way analysis of covariance showed significant differences among treatment groups. Using a two sample t-test, the results of the study indicated that Groups 1 and 3 and 2 and 3 significantly differed in attitude. No significant differences were found in attitude change between Groups 1 and 2.

Recently a great number of multi-ethnic social studies texts, reading books, and pamphlets have appeared for children of preschool and kindergarten age. The multi-ethnic materials and picture books have generally focused upon black, Indian, or other minority groups and white children living, playing, and working harmoniously together in some community setting. The basic assumption underlying these social studies materials was the notion that children are "influenced" by what they "read." Research has shown that literary materials and exposure to stereotypes on other forms of print media provide "directional sets" that influence the attitudinal development of young children (13, 16). However, educators find it difficult to understand what actually does happen to the reader, that is,

what effect does reading have on the learner? Russell (14:335) a language arts researcher contended that "from a research point of view the effects of reading are an uncharted wasteland in an otherwise well mapped territory."

Within the language arts content field, some research was completed which suggested that reading may influence attitudes. Over three decades, Agnes (1), DeBoer (2), Fisher (4), Loudermilk (9), McKillop (11), Squire (15), and Witty (21) supported the notions of attitude change through reading.

Within the social studies, researchers were concerned with multi-ethnic aspects and attitude change. Few attempts have been made to systematically modify young children's attitudes (10). However, investigations have been conducted on political attitudes of young children. Using survey techniques, Greenstein (6), and Hess and Easton (7), found that attitudes about political objects existed in children and secondly that attitudes in young children were developmental and changed as a function of age related experiences with attitude objects. Using social studies stimulus pictures depicting high, middle, and low class blacks and whites, Swick and Blackwell (17) questioned young children about political and cultural groups. Swick and Blackwell noted the existence of attitudes toward political and cultural groups in 4-year old black children. Several studies also examined racial attitudes of young children. Williams and Edwards (19) and Yawkey (24) favorably influenced attitudes of young black children toward themselves and whites and young

white children toward blacks with school based and literary experiences, respectively.

Outside the social studies and language arts, Yawkey (22, 23) using a training and transfer paradigm generally supported the above notions that: (1) young children possessed and/or could acquire attitudinal dispositions towards objects through planned experiences; and, (2) these attitudinal dispositions were developmental and changed with age.

Perhaps, like the language arts, the paucity of empirical research with social studies multi-ethnic materials, and young children may, in part, be explained by the recent emergence of this area.

The present research sought to:

1. Empirically investigate influences, if any, of selected multi-ethnic social studies reading on black children's attitudes toward themselves and whites.
2. Experimentally investigate influences, if any, of selected multi-ethnic social studies materials and related field-based experiences on black children's attitudes toward themselves and whites.
3. Explore influences, if any, of traditional and regular daily preschool experiences on black children's attitudes toward themselves and whites.
4. Initiate and build teacher directed reading and discussion approaches using related field experiences based upon social studies multi-ethnic publications.
5. Compare the attitudes of young black children's attitudes toward themselves and whites using a reading and discussion group; a reading, discussion, and related field experiences group; and, a traditional preschool experiences on pre and post criterion measures.

What differential effects, if any, exist between and among treatment groups concerned with attitudes of preschool black children

toward themselves and whites? This question was the primary concern of the present study.

Throughout this research, attitudes (8:177) were interpreted as:

> An enduring system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro-and con-action tendencies with respect to a social object.

Method

Subjects. A total of fifty-four children, all 4-year-olds served as Ss in this study. Three classrooms of eighteen Ss each representing a low socioeconomic population (SES) from the Eastern coast of the United States were used in the research. SES was determined by U.S. Department of Agriculture's poverty guidelines based upon total family income. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Form B was administered to all Ss. Differential effects of sex in learning was not of interest in this study.

Stimuli

Across groups, all children were pretested using an attitude inventory at the beginning of the experiment and posttested thirty consecutive school days later at the conclusion of the experiment. A 20-item test, "Attitudes of Young Black Children Towards Themselves and Whites" was constructed under the guidelines suggested by Murphey and Likert (12) and was based upon Wayne State University's "An Opinionnaire in Intergroup Relations--AS 20" and Thurstone's "Attitude Toward the Negro--Form B." Before the inven-

tory was employed, it was field tested on another group of Ss of similar age and SES. Four entire statements and eight words were eliminated and changed from the orginal inventory when difficulty in comprehension were evidenced in the field test group. By eliminating difficult passages and terms the inventory may have become more meaningful to the early childhood population.

The 20-item attitude inventory contained five positive statements concerning blacks and five positive statements concerning whites and were scaled for strongly positive. Additional items of the attitude questionnaire consisted of five negative statements concerning blacks and five negative items dealing with whites and were scaled 1-2-3 for strongly negative. Thus, ten items were scaled and weighted positively and ten scaled and weighted negatively concerning blacks and whites to check consistency of the children's response dispositions toward the items. An example of a positive item concerning black children taken from the attitude inventory was, "Black children are strong and good looking!." This statement was weighted 3 points (YES); 2 points (?); and 1 point (NO). Thus, if a black child responded "YES" to the above statement, he/she received 3 points, if a "DON'T KNOW" 2 points, if "NO" 1 point. A teacher's aide was trained to individually administer the test and all directions to the child. This trained aide also collected all pre- and posttest data in the experimentation. Examples of both the directions for the test administration and the 20-item attitude scale, "Attitudes of Young Black Children

Towards Themselves and Whites" can be obtained by writing the suthor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. (See page 16.)

Procedure

Pretests were administered in all three groups in all classrooms on the same day. The following day the treatments was initiated in Group 1--reading and discussion, in Group 2--reading, discussion, and field experiences, and, in Group 3--the traditional or regular preschool experiences.

In the reading discussion and field experience group, the children listened and discussed stories for 15 minutes for thirty consecutive school days and took four field trips. Social studies multi-ethnic picture books were selected from school libraries with the restriction that they contain black and white children in text and that the books relate to the positive scaling of each statement in the inventory (13). All books emphasized black and white feelings, situations, and ideas in both urban and suburban environments. The children began each session by talking about the pictures in the book. At the conclusion of the story the black children talked about the activities that both black and white children did in the text. The social studies concept that "children are the same" regardless of skin color and are capable of doing many things was the main concern of the teacher.

The picture books and their authors in order of sequence read were:

1. Look at Your Eyes (Showers)
2. Come with Me to the Nursery School (Hard)
3. Two Is a Team (Beim)
4. The Valentine Box (Lovelace)
5. Evan's Corner (Hill)
6. The Two Friends (Mannheim)
7. I'm Glad I'm Me (Stone)
8. Gabrielle and Selena (Desbarats)
9. What Mary Jo Shared (Udry)
10. Straight Hair Curly Hair (Goldin)
11. Miguel's Mountain (Binzen)
12. The Case of the Dumb Bell (Bonsall)
13. The Case of the Cat's Meow (Bonsall)
14. Surprise for Mrs. Burns (Turner)
15. I Know What I Like (Simon)

In addition to the reading and discussion of these social studies multi-ethnic texts, Group 2 children were given four field based experiences. These field trips were follow-up experiences for the stories. Two field trips were taken to urban and two focused on suburban settings. The teachers in these field based experiences focused upon the: (1) activities black and white people were doing, and (2) physical descriptions of these people. The children were also required to name some of the activities these people were engaged in and suggest things these people might be able to do regardless of skin color and geographic location.

In Group 1, reading and discussion, the Ss completed all the same multi-ethnic texts and in the same order as subjects in Group 2. The time of the day in which the story and discussion were presented was alternated from morning to afternoon in Groups 1 and 2. Field experiences as in Group 2 were not administered to Ss in Group 1.

In Group 3, the Ss experienced neither reading-discussion of multi-ethnic picture books nor field experiences. These Ss

received the traditional experiences associated with preschool and dealt with the seasonal and holiday oriented curriculums. This group was essentially employed as a control.

Experimental Design

Hartley's F_{max} test was used to test for the homogeneity of variance among treatment groups. This test as described by Winer (20) was run to determine whether Ss in the treatment groups differed from each other.

For the main analysis a one-way analysis of covariance was run according to Winer (20). Pretest scores where the covariate variable and scores on the posttest the criterion variable.

For each administration of the attitude scale, the minimum and maximum possible score on the pre- and posttest for all Ss ranged from 20 to 60 respectively. A homogeneity of regression test as described in Winer was run to test the assumption of a single slope in the use of the covariate adjustment method.

Results

A one-way analysis of variance (20) was used to test the null hypothesis of no significant differences in IQ among three treatment groups. The null hypothesis of no significant differences in IQ as represented by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was not rejected ($F = 1.22$, $df = 2$, $p. > .05$).

The null hypothesis of no significant difference between variances among experimental groups was not rejected (F_{max} = 1.02, df = 17, 17, p. > .05). The three groups had homogeneity of variance. For the main analysis, the null hypothesis of no significant differences between pre- and posttests across treatment groups was rejected. The observed F was 41.8 (df = 2, 42, p. < .0001). The observed F for the adjusted criterion scores was 72.1 (df = 1, 42, p. < .0001).

A two sample t-test as outlined by Edwards (3) was run to determine where the significant differences between the means on the pre- and posttests existed. The means on pre- and posttests are shown

Table 1.--Group Means Per Treatment Groups 1, 2, and 3

Group	X Pretest	X Posttest
1	43.7	52.8
2	44.9	54.7
3	42.8	43.6

in Table 1. A statistically significant difference between the means of Groups 2 and 3 was observed (t = 10.38, df = 34, p < .01). Statistically significant differences between the means of Groups 1 and 3 was also noted (t = 177, df = 34, p < .05) No statistically significant differences were found between the means of Groups 1 and 2 (t = .65, df = 34, p > .05).

Discussion

The present research dealt with multi-ethnic social studies materials, and attitudes of black urban children age four. The major concern of this study was to determine if young black children's attitudes toward themselves and whites were modifiable using multi-ethnic social studies materials and discussion with or without field based experiences and employing traditional preschool curriculum oriented around seasonal and holiday experiences. First, the basic conclusion drawn from this research is that: (1) reading and discussion of multi-ethnic social studies materials and (2) reading and discussion of social studies coupled with field based experiences can influence the attitudes of young black children toward themselves and whites. Secondly, preschool curriculums emphasizing traditional seasonal and holiday activities have little significant effect on attitude change when compared with those based upon discussions of multi-ethnic social studies materials with and without a field based component.

The current research basically supported previous language arts research (1, 4) dealing with attitude change and reading with 10- and 17-year old Ss. This study and the investigations of Goodman (5), Hess and Easton (7), Trubowitz (18), and Yawkey (22,23) tended to confirm the importance of the formative years in acquisition of attitudinal dispositions and response sets as they are first developed and learned in young children.

Although intelligence test scores as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Form B, did not significantly differ between and among treatment groups and Hartley's F_{max} test for homogeneity of variance was not significant in this study, important differences in performance between and among treatment groups were noted. Through a post hoc analysis of the results of this experiment and the treatment groups involved, several points may be delineated. First, the attitudes of young black children in reading and discussion of social studies multi-ethnic materials were significantly changed toward whites compared with control group children who received traditional preschool social studies experiences dealing with the social and seasonal curriculum. Secondly, significant attitude change was also observed between those black children who read and discussed social studies multi-ethnic materials in conjunction with field based experiences and those Ss who received regular social studies preschool experiences dealing with holiday and seasonal activities. Implications for attitude change of young children based upon traditional preschool curriculum was also suggested by this research. Although used mainly as a control group, it seemed that curriculum based upon typical holiday and seasonal approaches was relatively ineffective in changing attitudes of those young black children toward themselves and whites as compared to other curriculums. This could indicate that not only must early educators seriously examine curriculum in relation to new cognitive orientations but also

that early educators should build specific affective components into and/or as a part of intellectual experiences of young children.

Research by McAdoo (10), Williams and Edwards (19), and Yawkey (24) has arrived at similar results but teaching methodology, age, and race of Ss, and experimental design have differed between and among these studies. McAdoo (10) significantly modified black children's racial attitudes through planned experiences in school environments. In other research, Williams and Edwards (19) modified young children's attitudes through experiences based upon likenesses and differences among races. With urban and rural 7-year old white children, Yawkey (24) significantly changed attitudes toward blacks. At the termination of planned systematic reading and discussion, significant attitude changes in a direction favorable to the American black were obtained.

Studies have indicated that planned teaching methodology and social studies multi-ethnic materials can affect young children's racial attitudes. In the final analysis, it is the teacher who must make special and systematic efforts in order for young children to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others. Opportunities must be made available for direct contact with materials and actual discussions concerning racial attitudes so that children can see that "children are children" capable of doing an infinite number of things regardless of skin color.

Conclusion

Using 4-year old urban black children, the results of the study indicated that:

1. Using multi-ethnic social studies materials and discussion with young black children does make a significant difference in their attitudes toward themselves and whites as measured by an attitude questionnaire.
2. Employing multi-ethnic social studies materials, discussion based upon field experiences with black children does make a significant difference in their attitudes toward themselves and whites as measured by an attitude questionnaire.
3. No significant differences were found in attitude change between groups employing multi-ethnic social studies materials plus discussion and a group using multi-ethnic social studies materials and discussion coupled with field based experiences as measured by an attitude questionnaire.

There were a number of distinct limitations to this study. The selection of Ss, SES level, social studies materials used, and the construction of the attitude questionnaire with possible sensitization effects from re-administration and its methodological procedures were several limitations.

Further research might suggest solutions to the following:

1. What other types of experiences in school environments could be advantageously utilized in early childhood classrooms in assisting and solving interpersonal problems and racial misunderstandings?
2. What other types of experiences in school environments could be advantageously utilized in elementary classrooms in assisting and solving interpersonal problems and racial misunderstandings?
3. What implications does a favorable attitude change in young children toward minority groups have in terms of social studies curriculum construction in present American schools?

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SCALING

Attitudes of Young Black Children Towards Themselves and Whites

Yes ? No Black children are strong and good looking.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children should play with black children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children should not work with white children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children have ugly hair.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children can give black children a chance to talk.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children can write their names.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children have hair on their heads.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children should not go to the library.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children should boss black children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children can share things with white children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children can visit the homes of black children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children cannot count.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children should not play with black children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children should shake hands with white children to show that they can be friends.

Yes ? No White children should attend prekindergarten.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children have ugly noses and big lips.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children should not go to school with black children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No Black children should not be kind to white children.
3 2 1

Yes ? No White children should not let black children go home
3 2 1 with them.